

VZCZCXRO5026
OO RUEHBC RUEHDE RUEHIHL RUEHKUK
DE RUEHGB #0127/01 0171446
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
O 171446Z JAN 08
FM AMEMBASSY BAGHDAD
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5252
INFO RUCNRAQ/IRAQ COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 000127

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 01/16/2018
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: PRT KIRKUK: PROGRESS ON RECONCILIATION AS NEW ARAB
DEPUTY GOVERNOR SWORN IN

REF: A. 07 BAGHDAD 4208
[1](#)B. 07 BAGHDAD 4008

Classified By: Kirkuk PRT Leader Howard Keegan for Reasons 1.4 (b,d)

This is a Kirkuk Provincial Reconstruction Team (PRT)
message.

[1](#)1. (U) Summary: Rakan Al-Jabouri assumed the office of
Deputy Governor for Kirkuk Province on January 15. Twenty
out of 26 Provincial Council members voted in favor of Rakan
while another six members submitted blank ballots. The
naming of an Arab Deputy Governor in the predominantly
Kurdish province of Kirkuk is part of the agreement that in
December ended the Arab Bloc's one-year boycott of the
Provincial Council (represented by the Iraqi Republican
Gathering) and is an important advancement in local
reconciliation. End Summary.

Signs of Reconciliation:
Arab Assumes The Office Of Kirkuk Deputy Governor

[1](#)2. (U) On January 15, Rakan Al-Jabouri assumed the office of
Deputy Governor for Kirkuk Province (aka Tameem province).
Of 26 Provincial Council members present from the Kirkuk
Brotherhood League (KBL) and the Iraqi Republican Gathering
(IRG), 20 votes were cast in favor of Rakan while 6 members
turned in blank ballots. The event was widely publicized by
local media. Key speakers repeatedly noted and appreciated
the efforts of the PRT in support of this historic moment.
More than two hundred Iraqi citizens attended the event,
including community and tribal leaders.

[1](#)3. (U) Chairman of the Provincial Council Rizgar Ali (KBL)
remarked during the opening speech that the nomination of
Rakan to the position of Deputy Governor was part of the
KBL's agreement with the IRG to end the year-long IRG
boycott of the Provincial Council (reftels). Rizgar remarked
that the occasion symbolized their efforts to obtain a joint
administration for Kirkuk Province. Of note, he also
expressed his desire that the reputation of Kirkuk Province
"not be based on oil but on the various ethnic groups living
in peace."

[1](#)4. (U) Kirkuk Governor Mustafa also stressed the importance
of the occasion. He emphasized the need for the Deputy
Governor and all political leaders of the province to work
together for the benefit of all the people of Kirkuk, without
discrimination based on ethnicity or religion. The Governor
joined other leaders calling on the Turkman Bloc to end their
boycott and rejoin the political process (Note: The Turkman
Bloc has been boycotting the Provincial Council for a year.
The PRT is facilitating negotiations with the goal of
bringing them back to the PC Chambers. End Note). The
Governor has long complained of the need for a Deputy
Governor to assist him with his workload.

Provincial Council Vote:
A Sign of Democracy In Action

¶5. (U) A Kirkuk judge was then introduced to supervise the vote of the Provincial Council members. Chairman Rizgar symbolically appointed a representative from the KBL and the IRG to witness the vote tabulation. These witnesses, both PC members, watched carefully as each ballot was retrieved from the transparent box and opened by the judge prior to being read aloud for all those present. Upon completion of the vote tabulation, Rakan was sworn in as Deputy Governor by the presiding judge. In his acceptance speech, Rakan thanked the Provincial Council for electing him as Deputy Governor, adding that he was honored by their vote. Rakan echoed the sentiments expressed by Governor Mustafa for the Turkman Bloc to end their boycott and return to the Provincial Council.

¶6. (U) KBL bloc leader Mohammad Kamal congratulated Deputy Governor Rakan, emphasizing the importance of upholding the Iraqi Constitution, including the implementation of Article ¶140. A representative of the Arab Bloc, Abdullah Sami, also congratulated Deputy Governor Rakan and said he prayed that the problems of Kirkuk Province be solved through peaceful means. Abdullah Sami urged the Deputy Governor to treat everyone fairly, without distinction of ethnicity.

Comment

¶7. (SBU) While an important advancement toward

BAGHDAD 00000127 002 OF 002

reconciliation, especially in light of Article 140 considerations, the new Deputy Governor must walk a fine line in future months. The naming of an Arab Deputy Governor in Kirkuk Province was a difficult feat that came about only after months of negotiations between the KBL and the IRG and much encouragement and guidance provided by the PRT. While the PRT considers this an advancement towards reconciliation, Rakan will have to walk a fine line between appeasing the approximately 50 percent Kurdish majority while also addressing the issues of interest to the approximately 30 percent Arab population, namely employment generation and the addressing the shortage of basic services in the rural areas of the province.

¶8. (SBU) The PRT envisions the Deputy Governor,s portfolio will include security as an important component. The IRG and other Arab leaders have long sought to address several security issues, including the return of Kirkuk Province Arab detainees to Kirkuk Province as well as speedier trials for those detained. Given that Deputy Governor Rakan is from the Hawaja District (one of the key Arab areas in western Kirkuk), he is expected to use his influence to help stabilize the security in the Arab areas. The next step in local reconciliation is to get the Turkman Bloc back on the Provincial Council. They have been boycotting it for a year. During her recent visit the Secretary urged them to end the boycott and the PRT is facilitating negotiations. In the negotiations, the main outstanding issues involve reconciling Turkman bloc proposals on such issues as making Turkmani an official language in Kirkuk and allocation of key government positions, including 32% of directors general slots in Kirkuk, with what the KBL is willing to concede. End Comment.
CROCKER